

D 528

.W4

Copy 2

**FT MEADE**  
**GenColl**























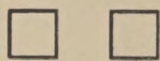




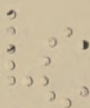
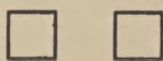




# Four Years After



*A Six Hundred and Fifty  
Mile Tour of American-  
French Battlefields*



By

*John F. Weedon*

*Room 307—Peoples Gas Building*

*Chicago*

Copyright 1922 by John F. Weedon

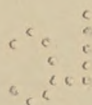
Copy 2.



D528

.W4

Copy




DEC - 4 '22 ✓

© C1A692237 C

no v





## Four Years After

---

**I**T is strange how a chance meeting, or a few casual remarks with a stranger may sometimes lead direct to important and interesting events in our lives. Last winter, in Texas, my wife met a mother whose son had lost his life in France. She did not know exactly how, when or where: except that he had died somewhere near the Swiss border. She asked us to make some inquiries and ascertain if possible where her boy was buried. This my wife promised to do. All the information we had was his name and the Army division to which he belonged and it looked to me, at first, as if finding the grave of a particular soldier in France was like finding some particular grain of sand on a sea beach. However we found that Uncle Sam's care of his dead soldiers was, and is, perfectly marvelous. The location of the grave caused us no trouble at all, but finding it took us, incidentally, over many, many miles of war scarred territory.

It took us to Soissons, Chemin de Dames, Craonne, Berry-au Bac. 'Hill 108', Rheims, St. Menehould, Argonne, Vauquois, Mort-Homme, Fort Douaumont, Montfaucon (Crown Prince's Observatory and headquarters) Romagne (The American Cemetery, 25,500 graves) Chalons-sur-Marne, Epernay, Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Woods, —and back to Paris.

Our party consisted of about thirty people: half of them French and the rest Americans. We had two splendid large cars, the Americans occupying a "White" made in Cleveland, and while our guide was a Frenchman and served with distinction through the war, he had previously been a chef at the Congress Hotel, Chicago. Our chauffeur was an ex-aviator, who at times was still possessed with the idea that he was operating a flying machine. The roads were splendid, and the driver had a fixed disinclination to take any one's dust. It gave us a little thrill to have the American car pass all the French ones, but some of the passengers got a little nervous when, at times, the

speedometer needle pointed to 65, and 70—However this was "kilometers" and not miles, but it still meant something close to forty miles an hour, which is a pretty fair pace for even a heavy sight seeing car. However the trip was made without accident of any kind, although we had what were apparently some hair-breadth escapes.

### The Country

To get an idea of what the war area resembles, imagine a country of hills and valleys in endless succession. These hills are very high and from the top of many of them it is no difficulty to see fifteen miles in any direction.

The roads along the top of these hills are shaded with trees which however have been shot away wherever artillery has been at work and are now bare and broken stumps, like the charred skeletons of some devastating fire. For miles and miles along the Chemin de Dames, for instance, there is nothing but these ghastly relics of what were once fine shade trees. This territory it must be remembered was shelled more or less continuously for four years.

Besides the succession of hills and valleys, there are large stretches of forests, which look small enough when seen from a height, but are of considerable extent when one gets close to them. While this land is extremely fertile, and carefully cultivated,—where it has been reclaimed, or has not been devastated; one sees nothing of farm houses;—just country, country, country, for distances of about five miles. Then comes a little village, and for another five miles nothing but country again.

It seems that the people who farm these lands live in these villages, and travel up and down these roads to their respective farms. Crops are planted alternately in rows of various width, so that from a distance a hill side looks as if it were covered with a crazy quilt of odd shapes and



colors in browns and green. There is nothing that marks the end of one man's land and the beginning of another, except perhaps the color of the crop he is growing. The acreage is vast, but not given over to one crop, as is the case with most of our American country. Such is a rough description of most of the country over which we traveled.

### **Meaux, Soissons and Hill 108**

Our first point of interest about 20 miles from Paris, was "Meaux" where the French Army was carried in Paris taxi cabs to stop the German advance in 1914—This was the scene of the first battle of the Marne. The Marne by the way is not a wide river; about two-thirds the width of the Chicago River at Madison Street, I should say. It was here the German Army halted. Our guide informed us that the reason for this halt was that their infantry had entirely outstript the artillery, without which they did not wish to go further. It has been said that they waited here for the Crown Prince to arrive, but the house was pointed out to us which he occupied at that time. The Germans as everybody knows were driven back to Soissons, some fifty miles further on. Between these two places we passed villages in ruins, and some completely destroyed so that not one stone stands on the other and all overgrown with weeds. In other places, work is progressing of rebuilding the houses,—a process I will describe later.

Soissons remained the pivot for attacks for four years. It is still badly ruined. One part of the church is being restored. It was here that we saw a way-side church, altar and crucifix from the shelled church having been utilized by the soldiers. The French seem to be directing their activities towards restoring, first the churches, next the barns and graneries, and last their homes.

### **Chemin-de-Dames Craonne Barry-ua-Bac**

From Soissons we began to get into the country of trenches and barbed wire entanglements. Practically no recovery has been made of this territory yet. It is very much as the soldiers left it in 1918. Acres and acres of barbed wire entanglements remain as they were placed. In some places this barbed wire has been removed and piled into heaps. It occupies spaces as large as a city block. By one of the terms of agreement the German pris-

oners were retained after the signing of the armistice to do this work, and fill in the trenches. I really have no means of estimating how much of this work was done, but an enormous amount of it has not been done. I should judge at least two-thirds of it still remains.

Due to the curious sub-soil of France a rather strange condition exists. This part of France was once entirely under the sea. The sub soil is therefore a clay chalky compositon, said to be the fossil remains of sea creatures, upon which nothing at all will grow, not even weeds. Normally there is some two feet of wonderfully fertile soil on top of this, but when an excavation has been made and the sub soil thrown up nothing at all will grow on it, anymore than you can grow grass on chalk. The dug outs and trenches were made from this material which gives to this day the "scarred" appearance to the landscape so often referred to.

At the Romagne cemetery they told us that nothing at all will grow in the ground until it has been overlaid with a foot or more of soil brought from the forests. This is being done by trucks and rails—which in war time were used for bringing ammunition and supplies; about one third of the cemetery is already covered with a top dressing and grass is commencing to grow.

It is a question which I am not able to answer whether the trenched country will ever again be made to bear crops. Nothing short of having the area entirely covered with a new top dressing would make things grow. It is perhaps for this reason that no labor has been wasted removing entanglements and refilling trenches.

The Chemin-de Dames (The Road of Ladies) got its name when Louis 15th held court in Rheims, and reserved this wonderful road for the sole use of the numerous lady friends who visited him. It was lined with trees, now nothing but stark, staring skeletons. For miles and miles on either side are entanglements and trenches I have mentioned. Close by here stood the village of Craonne, now nothing but a heap of stones, and here too we alighted to visit Barry-au Bac (Hill 108) which being held by the Germans was tunneled and blown up by the French, incidentally destroying 800 French and 1200 Germans. We stood on the edge of the crater caused by this explosion. It is 150 feet deep and about 250 in



diameter. Later we saw larger ones but it seemed incredible at the time for any human effort to have caused an explosion of such gigantic proportions. A notice requests tourists not to disturb the soil as it is practically one great grave.

Plenty of relics can be picked up. Rifle shells, from which our guide extracted the powder, buckles, helmets, canteens and so forth. Unexploded mines and caches of ammunition are still being constantly discovered and destroyed. We were in time to see one big explosion of recovered ammunition.

### The Hindenburg Line

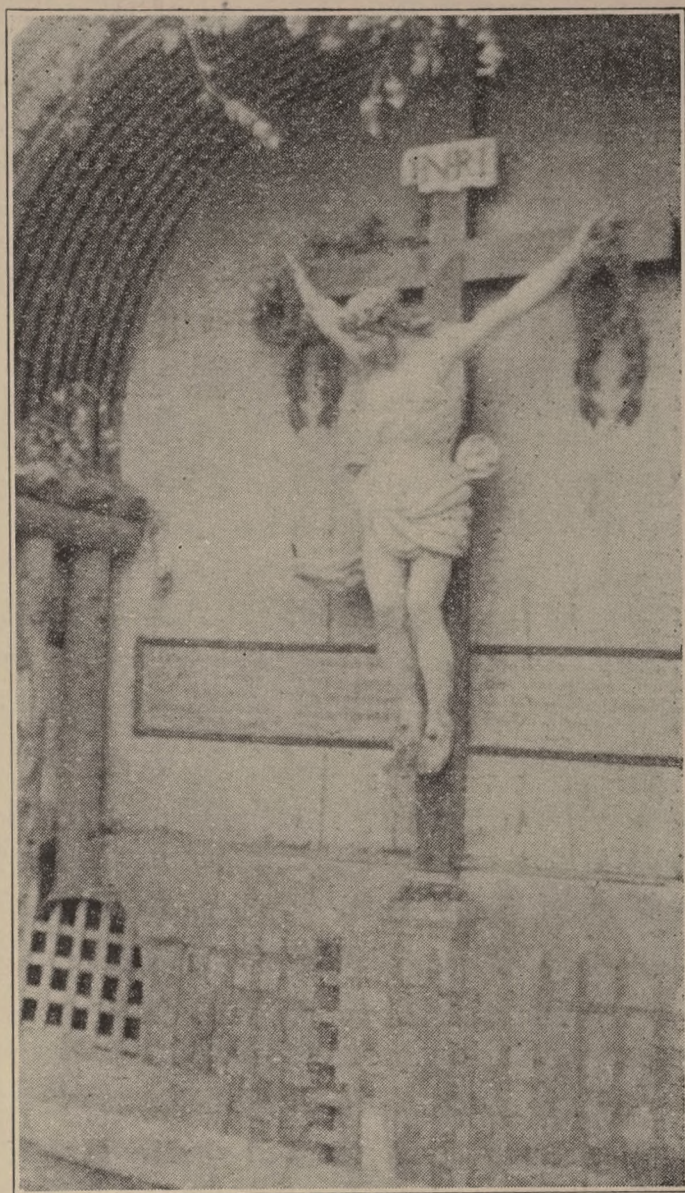
It will be remembered that what is known as the "Hindenburg Line" was constructed to lessen the enormous loss of life in the German Army. The "line" still stands. It consists of a series of cement forts, with circular shaped domes made of railroad iron and cement, walls eighteen inches thick. The tops of these forts rise two or three feet above the ground, but are covered with sod.

The openings from which the machine and larger guns were fired are protected with cement doors on hinges of enormous weight and thickness, which nevertheless work fairly easily even now.

These forts stand about one hundred feet apart all down the road and are connected by underground tunnels. How far this system remains intact I do not know, but the part we saw could be utilized as a fort, on very short notice.

### Rheims

Rheims,—the French people pronounce it "Rhannes"—was under fire for four years. It contained about 12,000 houses and 176,000 inhabitants. At the close of the war only ten houses remained untouched, the rest were ruins. It is today a skeleton of a city—that-was. During the advance of 1914 it was occupied by the Germans. The house in which the Crown Prince stayed is still partly standing, so is the beautiful cathedral in which he stabled his horses. Opposite his house is a little tobacco shop, occupied by the old woman who was there in 1914—The Crown Prince used to come across the street and help himself to the best tobacco and cigars. During these visits she beat it to the basement,—and he left no payment. She sold us very good cigars at a franc a piece.



WAYSIDE CRUCIFIX SAVED FROM RUINED CHURCH NEAR SOISSONS

The old French houses were built of stone and built very strongly, that is the reason so many walls remain standing where there is absolutely nothing to hold them up. Rheims was bombarded from a distance of five miles. The bombs falling perpendicularly, had a tendency to go through the roof clean to the basement, blowing out doors and windows but leaving most of the structure standing. This is what makes Rheims a town of skeleton buildings.

The town was famous for its Cathedral, its wines, and woolens. Most of the cellars were made for storing wine and are of course very deep; what we would call sub-cellars. This is also one reason why so many of the houses, or rather walls remain standing; the bombs exploded so deep down in the earth. Considering that in one week no less than seventy thousand shells were poured on it, an average of ten thousand a day it is a marvel that anything remains at all.

I am not entirely a believer in miracles, but I give you this fact for what



it is worth. The Bishop of Rheims remained in the city during the entire four years. He had a bed placed in a shallow basement on the side of his house, which was knocked about his ears. He came out of the war physically untouched. During the war he was visited by the President and Staff of the French Republic and was decorated, (in a deep sub-cellar by the bye, for the town was still occasionally bombarded) with the legion of honor. Rheims has something to boast about besides the "Jackdaw."

We strolled around the streets one moonlight night, and the effect of the light through the ruins was very awe inspiring; and this effect was greatly heightened by the fact that every once in a while voices reached us from queer corners, where we would find some little section had been repaired and was being inhabited. It seemed doubly strange to find human beings living practically alongside these gruesome skeletons of houses, without roofs, floors, windows or doors.

The Cathedral is in process of reconstruction, and a good deal of work has been done on it. In many instances glancing shots have come literally down the sides, making strange grotesques of the statuary, taking a head from one and an arm from another. In all standing walls and buildings, mostly built of grey stone, the appearance is somewhat similar to the face of a man pitted with small pox.

#### **Fort de la Pompelle and Vienne la Chateau—Argonne**

This is a particularly well constructed Fort, built by the French before the war and practically impregnable. Owing to the fact that the French drew supplies from the rear, where they were well protected, the Germans found it impossible to take this Fort. However they held the heights at some considerable distance. With a persistence which seems almost incredible they tunneled the entire distance, but through a miscalculation blew up a harmless but perfectly good farmhouse some hundred yards away.

Vienne-le Chateau is reached by a road that is literally honeycombed with dug-outs. It gives the road the appearance of having been some ancient Aztec village. Much of the cam-

ouflage, dried and fluttering in the wind still remains. The poultry wire which camouflaged the sides and overheads of the road is still standing in many places, with pieces of what was once vegetation still clinging to it. The "Hostellerie-de-Argonne, where we stopped for lunch, was the Headquarters of the famous "Lost Battalion." On the walls can still be seen the army notices posted by them, and never disturbed since.

Just before we came to this place we visited a field hospital, the most marvelous of its kind I ever saw. It was built at a place where the road dipped down from the surrounding country, thus making it possible to have a protected underground refuge with an entrance practically on the level. It was equipped with operating rooms, supply department, and "chambers" sufficient to accommodate about one hundred wounded. Stretchers and some of the beds were still lying around the place. In the party previous to ours was a surgeon who had served in this same hospital, and he recounted that the French nurses had supplied the need for blood transfusions, whenever such had been necessary. They did this voluntarily and with no let-up to their regular round of duties.

#### **Varennnes and Vauquois**

We passed through Varennes, famous before the war as the place where Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were captured and carried back to the execution in Paris; now a tumbled heap of ruins, like the rest of the villages through which we passed. Stone masons are at work in all these villages, some houses have been rebuilt and the work is progressing, but there is an enormous lot still to do. The stones from the ruined houses have been cleaned off and laid in orderly piles and are being used on the new work. Due to the solid manner in which all these French houses were constructed any wall left standing is utilized to build on to, unless of course it is too badly damaged to be safe. The new houses are being built on the same lines as the old ones, but not so solidly. I was told this was impractical on account of increased expense of building. Masons receive about three dollars a day, and I judge that building operations are not hampered by any Building Trade Union's restrictions.



We visited Vauquois; a mountain literally split in two by underground explosions which left a crater between the two halves that a mountain goat could not traverse. It seems that opposite sides of this mountain were held by the French and Germans, each of whom contributed towards the construction of this crater in the hope of dislodging their enemy. Our guides were particularly anxious that we should visit the German "galleries,"—an extensive system of underground tunnels and passages.

As the climb to the top of the mountain was of itself a work of some considerable effort the weaker ones of the party were left behind. This proved to be very fortunate. We found a concealed opening at the top, were each given a candle and began to descend. The steps were just slimy ledges of chalk and clay, oftentimes broken entirely, and they wound round and round like the steps to a turret. An electric wire hung on one side, which enabled us to steady ourselves with one hand while the other grasped the candle. This slippery slimy descent seemed to have no end, but at last we came to the "galleries."

Some one ventured to ask the guide if he was sure he knew the way out, as the exit by the way we came seemed to offer some very considerable difficulties; in many places we went down sheer drops by the aid of iron ladders that felt none too safe. The guide said "You think I should be a fool to take you some place I could not get you out. To get out is easy." So we began our exploration of the "galleries."

They were damp and slimy; the woodwork was rotten and sagging, and a queer kind of fungus growth like damp brown moss hung from the top and sides and brushed our faces. Most of the time we had insufficient head room and had to proceed in a stooping posture, which soon made us all literally and figuratively very tired, the air was bad and there was a great variety of unpleasant smells. Nevertheless we stopped to inspect a tunnel, laid with narrow gauge rails, through which the Germans brought supplies and ammunition. We also turned aside to look at the bunks in which they

slept; wooden racks like steerage quarters in an old time emigrant vessel. Just so that we would not miss anything the guide coralled us in a chamber of rotting timbers which the dim light of our candles only seemed to make darker and more depressing. He tossed a stone in the corner and it was some seconds before we heard the noise of it falling in the water. This, he told us, was the well which the Germans had dug to keep them supplied with water.

We had had enough of these horrors, and refused to see anymore. We made a concerted demand on the guide to take us out by the shortest route. "Oh, getting out is easy, you see" he said." But we did not, neither did he. Since his previous visit all the entrances and exits to this place had been closed, except the one by which we entered, which for some reason had been overlooked.

The reason they had been closed was that a considerable cache of unused ammunition, and several unexploded mines had just been discovered. Fortunately we did not know this when we were down there. Our one desire was to get back to daylight, and we were ready to eat up the difficulties that lay before us if only we could get there.

If it had not been for the time and place I think that guide would have been treated to such a sample of forcible United States, that he would have concluded he had found an entirely new language. As it was we had little breath for anything but the climb back. By judicious hoisting and shoving we eventually all returned, somewhat soiled but heartily thankful. One gentleman, a mining engineer well known in America and of international reputation, to whom ordinary coal mines are a matter of every day business, said that had he known what he was going into no inducement on earth would have persuaded him to undertake it.

Conditions may have been somewhat sweeter when the Germans lived there, and certainly they managed somehow to have electric light, but I am convinced that, personally, I would much prefer a quick death outside to spending only a few hours in those awful galleries.



It is of course nobody's business to keep these galleries and tunnels in repair and it can only be a question of a short time when they will have to be closed to tourists. This should be done before some serious accident occurs.

### Verdun

From Vauquois to Verdun we passed a country scarred everywhere with wire entanglements and trenches, dug-outs and desolation. We found however a very comfortable hotel in Verdun. Senegambian and Morrocon soldiers are quartered in barracks close by. Verdun is not as badly shattered as Rheims, but is quite considerably shot up. Our hotel room faced a ruin ready to fall. The debris from the roof, (the front was out) had fallen on the middle floor which had assumed the shape of a V. It seemed as if the additional weight of a good shower of rain must bring the whole thing crashing to the ground.

Strolling round the ruins and narrow streets of Verdun after supper I was talking to my wife, when someone behind us said: "Oh say, something more. It sounds good to hear United States again." The speaker was a gentleman from Indianapolis who had been in the south of France travelling alone, and "on his own"—as the English say, which means that he was not attached to any tourist party. He said he had stood on the other side of the bridge just to hear some people talk English, but the American accent was what really warmed his heart.

This was particularly gratifying to me, as some of my misguided Chicago friends try to insist that I talk with an English accent. This can no longer be open to argument, my Verdun adventure proves the contrary beyond peradventure or appeal.

As a relief from the sepulchers of sacrifice we visited a Verdun candy factory next morning. They were very nice to us, gave us plentifully of their product, and staged a little surprise for us. We were all called around a table on which stood what appeared to be an enormous bomb; shell shaped. The attached fuse was lighted and we watched it burn down and finally explode with just enough noise to make the ladies say "Oh." The bomb proved to be made of chocolate and filled with all kinds of candies, all of which, including pieces of the chocolate "bomb" were secured for "souvenirs;"—but disappeared before noon.

### The Ossuaire. Turrene Tunnel.

Not far from Verdun is the "Ossuaire." It is a small chapel, presided over by a French Priest, Father Noel. It contains a large number of coffin shaped boxes in which are deposited bones picked up on the battlefield. Each box is labeled with the location where its contents were discovered. The Priest explained to us, in French, and he had a marvelously sweet voice, that the purpose of the chapel was to provide a place for the relatives and friends of those whose dead had been lost upon these battlefields and whose bodies had never been recovered for burial.

Here they might come to pray, if they wished. This chapel by the bye, was a gift from Americans, and the Knights of Columbus have promised some money shall be forthcoming to build a suitable shrine. At least this is what we understood the priest to say.

### Fort Vaux

Shortly further on is the Turenne Tunnel; an old railroad tunnel used by the French for war purposes. Mules were utilized to bring up ammunition, and one of them loaded with explosives tried to scratch himself on the walls of the tunnel, causing an explosion that buried over one thousand French soldiers.

The next point of interest was Fort Vaux. This was obstinately held by a small force of French. Like the other French Forts it is built on top of a high hill, with extensive galleries underground. Their source of supplies was cut off, and shell fire destroyed their means of procuring water. The Fort was tunnelled into by the Germans, who evidently preferred to capture it rather than blow it up. For three days without food or water the French held the fort against attacks of liquid fire, and other unusual means of assault. Of ten soldiers who started out to obtain water only one returned with a small bottle.

The French finally surrendered, and it is something to the credit of the German commander that he refused to accept the Frenchman's sword, after he discovered the conditions under which the place had been defended. This Fort proved as unfortunate for the Germans as it had for the French and they held it only about six months. The works are extensive, excellently planned and well built, but due to



some peculiarities of location the matter of supplies and water present difficulties that seem impossible to continuously overcome.

### Duamont and Montfaucon

In Duamont is "The Trench of Bayonets." Sixty-five soldiers of Brittany were buried alive by an exploding shell just as they were about to "go over the top." You can count them by the bayonets and the tops of their guns protruding above the ground. Mr. Rand, a Banker from Buffalo, N. Y; whose brother was killed fighting in this part of the country was so impressed by this extraordinary circumstance that he induced the French Government to allow him to turn this spot into a permanent cemetery, just as it stood.

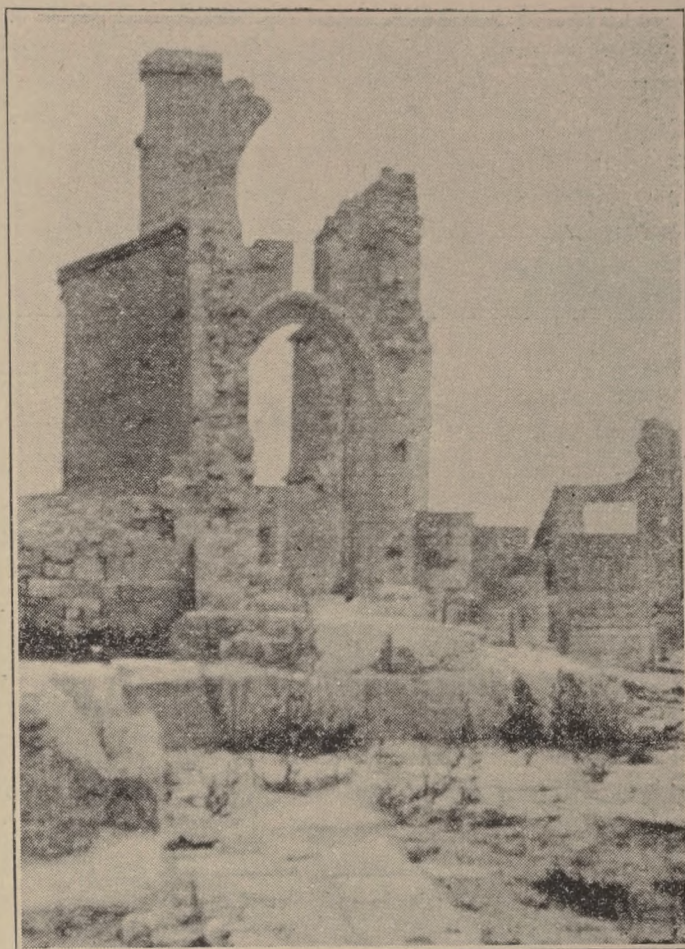
He caused a sort of peristyle of granite columns to be built over the trench, supporting a roof of the same material. Iron Gates and a handsome stone archway and steps mark the approach.

Shortly after making the above arrangements Mr. Rand was killed in an airplane crash, flying back from Paris to London.

Montfaucon was the Headquarters of the Crown Prince. It is a substantial house of granite, cement and railroad iron, constructed on an eminence which commands a view of the country circling around. One may see fifteen miles with the naked eye in any direction.

The Prince had a periscope which probably enabled him to see further. The point is the center of a circle thirty miles in diameter. The interior of the house is roomy and comfortable, with the usual elaborate retreats underground. The principle feature is an enormous square structure of cement which runs all the way up the center of the building and out on the roof. This is hollow and contained the periscope. The periscope itself was captured by American soldiers and can now be seen at West Point; so I am told.

Over the whole building is the apparently wrecked roof of some big farmhouse, its purpose being to camouflage the structure and make aviators believe

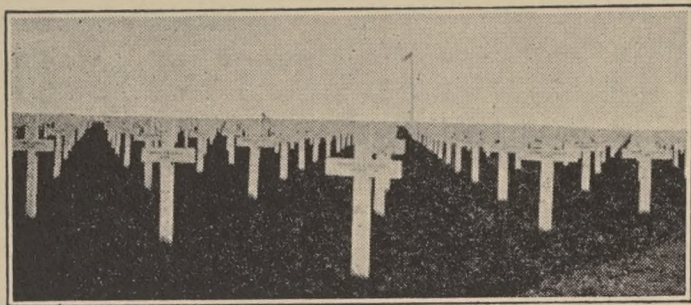


*Ruins of the Church Montfaucon*

it was nothing but some old cow shed or farm building. One thing which impressed me was the thickness of the floor between the first and second story. It is made of railroad iron and solid cement, from twelve to fourteen inches thick. From the weight of this one may guess the substantial nature of the lower part of the building. Here also are the ruins of a marvelously beautiful church, built by monks in the 9th Century. The floor is full of old gravestones with ancient French spelling. The beautiful tracery on some window copings, which still remain standing can be made out. There is a great deal of marble scattered around. From this material the Germans constructed a look-out.

From here we passed on to "The Valley of Death" where seventy thousand Frenchmen gave up their lives for their country. We passed the village of Bras; completely destroyed, and came to the village of Samogneux, which the French and Americans took and lost three times in one day, finally, of course holding it, and from there we came to a section which deserves a chapter by itself.





### The American Cemetery at Romagne

I started in by saying that we were led to take this tour through a desire to visit, on behalf of a mother, the grave of her son. We first applied to the office of the Chicago Daily News in Paris who directed us to the Registration of Graves, at No. 8 Rue D'Iena. All we had was the name of the boy and the unit to which he was attached. We did not know where or when he died. In less than five minutes after we stated our case at the Registration office we were given a type-written slip giving the name and location of the cemetery, the lot number and the grave number. We had now come to the place where he was buried.

The Romagne cemetery is situated on a battlefield in the Argonne district, one of the latest in the war where thousands of our American boys gave up their lives. The cemetery contains about twenty-five thousand graves, everyone an American, and less than one thousand of them remain unidentified. The unidentified are buried in a lot by themselves, but as soon as identification is complete, (and the most extraordinary means are taken to procure absolute identification), the remains are re-buried in the identified section, with name and regiment recorded on the cross, which are identical on every grave, except for those of Hebrew faith. These are distinguished by the star of Israel.

There are six exclusively American cemeteries in France, one in Belgium and one in England, (at Woking). To correct some erroneous impression in regard to the French cemeteries let me say that they are "American Territory;" deeded to the United States by the French government, without fee or payment of any kind. The American Flag flies over them.

We were met at the entrance to the cemetery by an American Army officer in charge; Captain Ross. We explained the particular object of our visit and he sent at once to the chaplain, a very fine gentleman. I do not know his rank, but his name is Smith and

he comes from San Antonio, Texas. He at once took us in charge, for by this time all our fellow tourists were interested in our search. When we arrived at the grave, to which he led us directly, he said "Don't you think it would be a comfort to his mother to know that we all, Americans, compatriots of his,—stood here and held just a little memorial service in honor of a brave man?" So he made a very appropriate and touching prayer; just a few words, and we all joined in the Lords Prayer, and then a young man from Detroit who had come along and kindly brought his camera took a picture of the grave, so that we might have something tangible to send to his mother; and that was all. We placed a few flowers we had brought with us, they were "immortelles," on the grave and they were allowed to remain there a couple of days; for the rules do not permit any difference to be made in style or decoration of graves. All are treated alike, officers and men.

Each grave is marked with a white wooden cross on which is printed the name and regiment. For fear of defacement this information is also embossed on a strip of metal and nailed on the back. These wooden crosses are to be replaced with white marble crosses with the same inscription. When these are put up the friends can have any verse or inscription put on that they desire, up to 125 letters. There is also to be a marble memorial chapel where tablets may be erected by those who desire to do so.

A very large number of men are employed in this cemetery, many of them Russians that were held prisoners by the Germans, a good percentage of them were men of considerable rank and not a few were noblemen. They are men of education but prefer to work with pick and shovel; a return to their own country being impossible for them. The chaplain told us that twenty-two languages were spoken in that cemetery.

I stated previously that the subsoil of this cemetery is capable of raising nothing. Consequently a large part of the ground is devoid of any growth at all. Narrow gauge trucks and rails,—which were used during the war for supplies and ammunition, are now laid to the forests, and as rapidly as possible the ground is being overlaid with a new top soil, which will grow grass and flowers. Part of the ground has already been dressed in this fashion,



but it is the work of considerable magnitude to cart a top dressing of twelve to eighteen inches over a territory as extensive as this.

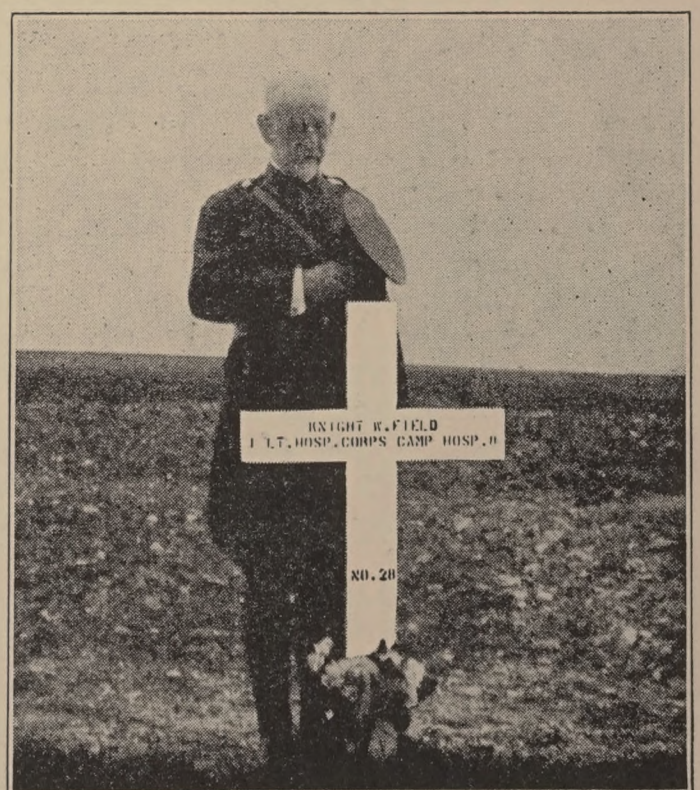
Chaplain Smith informed us that there is a permanent and liberal reward offered to the French people for the discovery of the remains of any American soldier. The slightest clew is followed with extraordinary care and pains, and no effort is spared to complete identification. Recently a body was discovered, with a watch on which were engraved initials. The army lists were consulted to ascertain who had these initials, then those who by no manner of means could have been near the spot were eliminated and the friends of the rest were written to and asked for particulars as to the watch. The effort resulted in a perfect identification. This burial took place only a short time before we arrived. Chaplain Smith reads the burial service over each, and his wife stands as representative of mother and friends.

The United States Government comes in for a good deal of unfavorable criticism in regard to treatment of its soldiers, some of which may be deserved, but from my own personal experience I can vouch for the fact that the Registration of Graves and the Romagne Cemetery are two of the most perfectly ordered organizations that any country could command, or any mother desire. For those poor boys who lost their lives in a war on foreign soil, I can imagine no better resting place than under the American Flag in the cemetery at Romagne.

### The Argonne Forest

The Argonne Forest covers two hills with a deep valley between. It may be a thousand yards between the sides of these hills. It is a dense and beautiful forest. I think the most beautiful I have ever seen. Buried away in the densest part of it was the Headquarters of Prince Rupert of Bavaria. You get to them by a winding path through the woods, and evidently the Prince did not like getting his shoes wet and muddy as the path is laid with evenly sawed branches with the bark still on them, one or two inches thick. The house itself is a comfortable little country dwelling, built partly into the side of the hill. The first room was the "office" the second a sitting room, third dining room,

and the fourth a tiled bath room. Only part of the marble tiling remains, the rest having been carried off by souvenir hunters. We thought at first that the walls had wall-paper, but found it was all hand decorated and very tastefully done. Underground are the usual "dug-out" quarters, quite spacious and airy, compared to some. In spite of our previous experiences we traversed some of the underground tunnels, (the forest, this part of it at least is fairly honeycombed with tunnels), and found a convenient exit at no very great distance. We really had had enough of underground tunnels and were not overly keen about going into more. Other houses, less palatial but similarly built and quite comfortable evidently housed some members of his staff, and the kitchens, were at some distances across a ravine. Outside the residence of the Prince was a little sort of terrace, where we found traces of a flower garden, and several thrifty plants, not at all indigenous to forests. The entire place was completely concealed with trees and shrubbery. One might roam that forest for four years and never find it. The forest itself is large enough to conceal the whole German Army, or a big part of it at least. Everywhere we came upon entrances to dug outs and tunnels. Given opportunity to obtain necessary supplies an army might exist there until it died of old age. No human machinery could dislodge it.



*The Grave we sought.*



We overstayed our time in this wonderful forest, and gave our ex-aviator chauffeur a chance to show what he could do. We had to make Chalons-sur-Marne in time for supper and it was some fifty or sixty miles distant, but the road was straight and excellent all the way. Even at that when the speedometer hand began pointing to the sixty-five and seventy mark some of the passengers showed signs of uneasiness. However, when the guide assured them it registered "Kilometers" and not miles, they settled back to figure how many miles sixty-five kilos was. I think they decided it was somewhere near forty. However before they got it settled we reached our destination, where we stayed for the night. Chalons-sur-Marne is an old city that dates back to the time of Charlemagne, who once held court here. Not badly damaged.

#### **Epernay—Chateau Thierry— Balleau Woods.**

At Rheims we rested close to the quarters made famous by the wine of the widow Cliquot. Like other places in Rheims, the Cliquot establishment was in ruins. This however was not the case with the establishment of Messrs Moet and Chandon, at Epernay, which was very slightly damaged. The Germans entered Epernay in 1914 but evidently under the impression that they would have ample opportunity to enjoy it later they did very little harm. We were invited to inspect the "wine caves" of Messrs Moet and Chandon and see for ourselves how champagne is made.

Don Perignon, Abbe of Hauterville, discovered in the year 1650 that the juice of the grape could be made to ferment without the addition of any chemical or extraneous matter,—which is the secret of champagne. It is pure grape juice, but not the kind that William Jennings Bryan uses. For three centuries the family of Moet and Chandon have made champagne. It is a family, not a firm or corporation and something of the extent of the business may be judged from the fact that the wine caves extend underground for a total distance of EIGHTEEN MILES. In spite of the enormous premises only about six hundred people are employed. The "caves" are, of course, underground and resemble large well lighted railroad tunnels, except for the fact that they are very damp and cold. Many women are engaged in various stages of the

work. I inquired as to the "rheumatic result" of working in such a cold damp place and was told that special pension provisions were made to cover this condition—which is freely acknowledged.

The wine is drawn from huge casks and bottled. It is then placed in racks, corks slanting downwards. These bottles are shaken up by hand every day. When the sediment settles in the cork end the bottle is placed in a freezing machine. Then the cork is removed and the frozen sediment part ejected, and the man smells the contents. I don't blame him, but just why he does it I don't know. The bottle then goes over to the syrup man, who puts in a small dose, a double dose, or none at all, according to the desired quality of the wine, sweet, dry, or extra dry. After that there is some more process of ageing, storing and packing, that is not particularly different from any other process of a similar nature.

We were then invited into a guest room and urged to sample the product. Now I was brought up to believe that none but a heathen would drink champagne at eleven o'clock in the morning, especially after a French breakfast which is nothing more than a cup of coffee or chocolate and a small roll shot full of holes. But of course one does not visit Moet & Chandon every day of his life. The host and the guides are very pressing,—and maybe there is more than a little heathen in some of us still. Anyhow there were a lot of empty bottles standing on the table when we rose to depart. I protested when the guide came around the third, or maybe the fourth time, but he seemed to take a childish delight in popping corks. He explained to me;—"This is a leedle trick of mine; You drink some wine and I don't have to work so hard to show you things."—Maybe, speaking generally, he was right.

There is one thing to be said about drinking in France; good drinking water is hard to get. The price of our tour included all hotel, tips and other expenses including wine and champagne, but did not specify water. Consequently we were charged extra for it whenever we ordered it; two francs seventy-five centimes a bottle, which although it bore a label contained nothing but just plain well water. At many of the Cafes in Paris they state

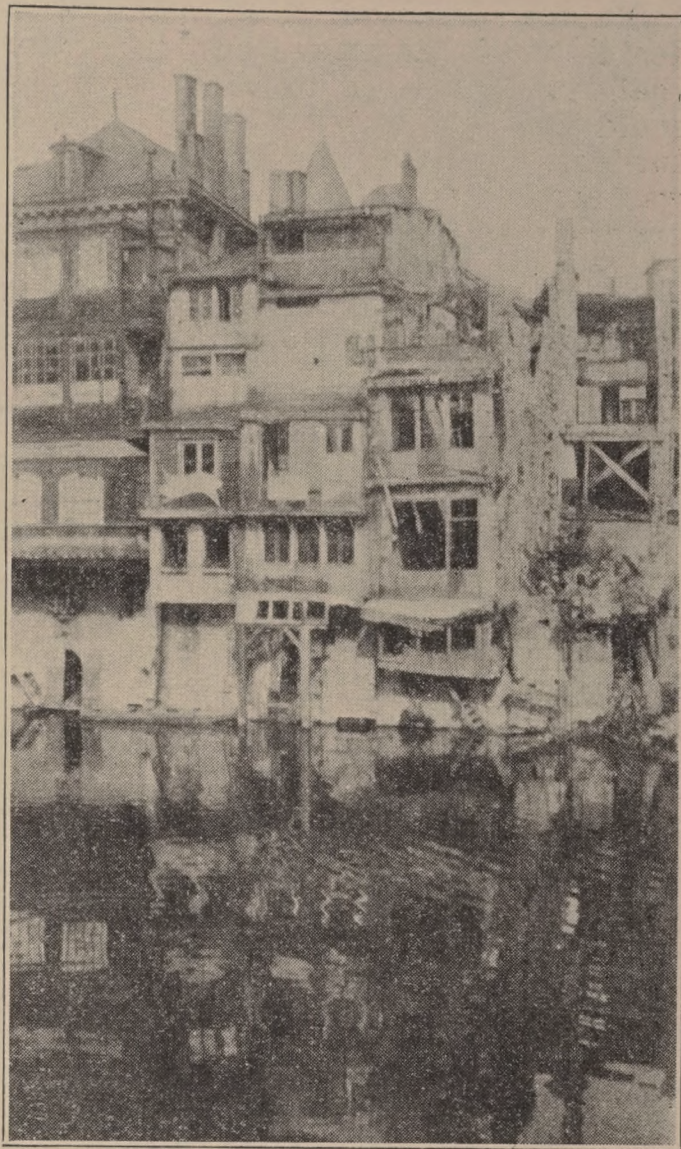


plainly on the menu card that a small additional charge will be made if you do not order wine.

This is a digression. We left Epernay to go to the scene of the second battle of the Marne,—the “Bloody Marne” the French call it. The Germans tried time and time again to cross here. Forty-five thousand bombs were dropped on them and over sixty thousand killed. The river actually ran red. I neglected to mention that both our guides, both drivers and one of our party, an American doctor had served in this section during the war, and furnished us with much first hand information that is not in the history books.

On the road skirting Belleau Woods are two stone monuments. One marks the place of beginning of the famous charge of our marines, the other one the place where they halted. Fierce battles raged around Chateau Thierry and Belleau Woods but the places are not so badly shot up and scarred as are some others. This is due to the fact that less artillery was used; there was more hand to hand fighting, and also for the fact that the American army did not go in for trench fighting exclusively. The Germans were intrenched in the Woods, the ground our boys had to cover was just open prairie, without as far as I could see a really sizeable bunch of weeds to act as cover. They must just have attacked in open formation on their nerve and on their stomachs. The bridge they blew up at Chateau Thierry has been replaced with a temporary affair. There is still evidence of hard fighting around this quarter.

On one side of the Marne here is a sort of Museum and Childrens reclamation and social center, run by the Methodist Episcopal church. They appear to be doing excellent work, on the order of Hull House and other similar institutions. Their enterprise include a creche for babies, whose mothers have to work in fields or factories. The babies look healthy and well cared for. I have never been in a country or community where children appeared to be as universally loved and cared for as in France. All the



*At Verdun—4 years after.*

people in every condition of life seem to love children and animals. Of the latter let me say that good dogs are quite scarce in France and command a high price. During the war all dogs not actually doing some sort of war work were killed; hence the present shortage. Quentin Roosevelt fell not far from here, and in this museum they have the radiator, pierced with shot, and part of his airplane.

And so we travelled back to Paris. We saw so much that some of our facts may be somewhat jumbled and confused. Impressions succeeded each other so rapidly that they had a tendency to overlay and merge. I have tried to keep them as correct and separate as possible, but heaven send no such war again. Cannot we try to inculcate a little international love and toleration with our national pride. God made us what we are, why should we seek to destroy each other?





## Guns of Peace

*Ghosts of dead soldiers in the battle slain,  
Ghosts of dead heroes dying nobler far  
In the long patience of inglorious war,  
Of famine, cold, heat, pestilence and pain,—  
All ye whose loss makes up our vigorous gain—  
This quiet night, as sounds the cannon's tongue.  
Do ye look down the trembling stars among,  
Viewing our peace and war with like disdain?  
Or, wiser grown since reaching those new spheres,  
Smile ye on those poor bones ye sow'd as seed  
For this our harvest, nor regret the deed?  
Yet lift one cry with us to Heavenly ears—  
"Strike with Thy bolt the next red flag unfurl'd,  
And make all wars to cease throughout the world."*

D. M. CRAIK

















Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: MAY 2001

**Preservation Technologies**  
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111





DOBBS BROS.  
LIBRARY BINDING  
DEC 78  
ST. AUGUSTINE  
FLA.  
32084



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 007 675 972 8